

# MONSTER!

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In response to numerous letters and phone calls MONSTER! has returned to utilizing the 8 pt. Narrow Helvetica font for it's text. I must admit I love the Brody font Industrial Solid A which was used for the body of last issue. However, as the complaints were strong and very descriptive ("I can't read the God-Damn thing!" "My eyes are bleeding" "I'm going to need a new pair of prescription glasses thanks to MONSTER! 751 -- and I'm forwarding you the bill!!"), I'm forced to return to the MONSTER! standard. And for those of you who said they couldn't read the articles within that extra fine issue, they'll be reprinted in the MONSTER! SPECIAL #2 or 3 somewhere down the line.

Speaking of THE MONSTER! SPECIAL, there has been a title change -- again. Okay, so it was first advertised as THE

MONSTER! 1991 ANNUAL, then I switched it to THE MONSTER! SPECIAL #1, now -- for this issue at least -- it will have the grand title of MONSTER! INTERNATIONAL: THE MONSTER! SPECIAL #1. And, yes, it will be out shortly. I have just finished proofing it and making other fine-tuning adjustments. For those of you who did pre-order it for \$3, you're the lucky ones. This mammoth 36-page full-size magazine (with glossy wrap-around cover art by Lyndal Ferguson) now will sell for \$3.50! Look for it in about two weeks.

Also note: the cover price of MONSTER! has increased due to printing costs -- although a one year subscription has stayed the same. Why? I move more copies through subscriptions than single issue sales, and consequently I am able to keep the quality of MONSTER!

pretty much the same (nice covers, cost of computer use, that sort of shit). So, if you're buying MONSTER! at the newsstand price, it may pay off if you subscribe -- that is, if you aren't just an occasional MONSTER! reader. Let's see, on the newsstand MONSTER! would cost you \$15 a year -- but a subscription is only \$12 -- a savings of \$3! Man, it's like SPORTS ILLUSTRATED!! And to all new subscribers there's a free gift: order now and get a \$10,000 Hell Bank Note Free! Yep, you can have for your very own a real Chinese Death Banknote -- just like the ones used in Hong Kong horror films to keep the spirits appeased!



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*MONSTER! only reviews MONSTER! films, none of that slasher stuff.*

**SPECIAL THANKS.** Betsy Burger, Eric Sulev, Craig Ledbetter, Horacio Higuchi, Steve Fantone, Mike Vraney, Michael Ferguson, Dennis Capicik, Jason Gray, Frank Henenlotter, Peter Clark, Steve Bissette, Michael & Mia Weldon, Tony Lee, Grandma Graphics, Dad Dynamics, and fanzine editors worldwide.

**COVER THIS ISSUE.** Alex D'Arcy is bitten by one of THE HORRORS OF SPIDER ISLAND (page 3)  
**BACK COVER:** VIDEO BOX ART FOR IZBAVITELJ (page 5)

# THE HORRORS OF SPIDER ISLAND

Original Title: **EIN TOTER HING IM NETZ**

Alternate US Release Title: **IT'S HOT IN PARADISE**

1959, D: Fritz Böttger

**NOT SO ITSIE-BITSIE SPIDERS BOTTLED BY STEVE FENTONE**

Mostly because of its long-time unavailability and consequent obscurity, this early German cheeseecake/horror flick has recently garnered some notable controversy within these very pages. It was often believed that a "Monsters Only" version fell under the above **HORRORS** title, while the more mundane **PARADISE** "take" was a "Nudies Only" incarnation. According to some, there were two different versions shot simultaneously and released under the above-noted English titles (Alas D'Arcy, star of both versions, reputedly directed the monstrous insect footage). A reliable acquaintance of mine vividly remembers seeing a version of this film on be-lated re-issue at a Toronto grindhouse in the early 70's. Though it bore the allegedly monster-less **IT'S HOT IN PARADISE** title (supposedly the straight exploitation print), the version contains both the monster and the "Adult Only" titillation ingredients. So, either there were assorted North American release prints of **EIN TOTER HING IM NETZ** available, or else **HORRORS OF SPIDER ISLAND** and **IT'S HOT IN PARADISE** were simply the identical film with wildly dissimilar titles.

Whatever's the case, the original German language cut of the film doesn't waste any opportunity to showcase its chorusline of buxom Aryan starlets in various stages of coy undress (barring explicit nudity), and also offers plenty of insect monster action to boot. In the "innocent" cheeseecake department especially, **EIN TOTER HORRORS** delivers its fair share, whether it consists of ingenious smothering sheetlight sweaters into place over turn-of-century bustlines, or exposing muscled gains from beneath mile-high mail-skirts.

D'Arcy (later to star as the long-in-the-tooth Hawaiian Count in Al Adamson's **BLOOD OF DRACULA'S CASTLE**, 1969) helms a noticeably slawazoid modeling agency which recruits a troupe of stripper-statured "fashion models". A pre-requisite for getting the job seems to be an unrepentant willingness to expose legs exhibitionistically from toe to thigh-top, and thus offer the voyeuristic cinematographer another chance to zoom in and loiter upon well-rounded feminine terrain. The initial in-modest minutes are a virtually uninterrupted bite of scantily-clad legs and tits. Accompanied at frequent intervals by appropriately wanton burlesque jazz (courtesy of tunnelsters Willy Mannes and Karl Betze).

While enroute to some indeterminate destination, an armer carrying the chosen models plummets aflame into the ocean (presumably the Pacific?). D'Arcy and a full eight (count 'em) disheveled and dripping insulane are the sole survivors. Sight-



ing a convalescent island, the happy throng eagerly paddle their severely-stressed inflatable life-raft ashore. Naturally, in spite of the inhospitable landscape, all the gals choose to stubbornly retain their high heels, stockings, garter belts, skimpy dresses or what-have-you. After all, just because you're marooned on a desert island is no reason to let your wardrobe go to Hell, right?

When D'Arcy forthwith comes across a spurting torrent of fresh drinking water discharging from a rock-face, all the hot 'n' bothered models immediately guzzle and splash it on themselves with uncontrolled suggestive glee. Here, the phallic/sexual symbols are amusingly obvious. Our castaways frudge further inland... could this mean more lingering, leering glimpses of models hiking up their vestigial skirts to better negotiate the forbidding rocky terrain? YOU BETCHAS!

**EIN TOTER** is loaded with similar subtle "symbols" concerns as that archetypal 50's US cheeseecake extravaganza, W. Mark Connell's awe-inspiring **UNTAMED WOMEN** (1952), which shared certain obvious plot details — namely, germless macho males stranded on a lush tropical isle with a select bevy of chicks possessing too little clothing and too few brains. SEE! D'Arcy straining and sweating as he pants bush undergrowth, SEE! the carefully placed disarrayed shoulder straps and strategically torn shirts of the gals, SEE! two bickering blondes cause a catfight over who gets to wear the last clean outfit, SEE! kitschy shower and underwear shots... SEE! SEE! SEE!

On their deserted island, our hero and multiple heroines find a dilapidated shack containing the horror-contorted corpse of an old man slung from an inordinately large cobweb. This amounts to an odd image, strangely foreshadowing the pronounced Vagina Dentata Black Widow-Woman imagery of Jesus Franco's erotica/cheeseecake horror **MISS MUERTE/THE DIABOLICAL DR. Z** (1965).

With precious little directorial flair or built-up following this initial "shock" sequence, Herr Böttger (or was it stand-in director D'Arcy?) unceremoniously introduces us to Spider Island's

indigenous nemeses — you guessed it — googly-eyed puppy and hide the size of damn footstools! These witless critters are delightfully ridiculous. In design and operation, providing welcome lulls in already-tenuous credibility. During an especially ludicrous and inattentive scene, D'Arcy gets embraced and bitten by one of these lanky spiders. Within mere seconds, he transforms into a "horrible" (HA HA, HA) hairy-visaged monster man, while back at the hut it's just one constant big beach party as the women lounge and jiggle in straining bikinis or tentatively-attached wraparound bath towels.

D'Arcy does the venerable creaky old "clutching hand" routine as he lurks menacingly behind trees or jumps out periodically to frighten some dumb starlet to death. With their patriarchal authority figure now absent, the remaining seven-or-so girls are free to wrestle each other and blithely pull her or rip clothing to their little hearts' content. They soon come to the unpleasant realization that there's a real-life monster in their midst when what's left of D'Arcy (probably a stunt double) sticks his hairy taloned mitts into the cabin and provokes synchronized communal shrieks of terror from the huddled babes. Even with the omni-present threat of this hirsute monster, what do the starlets do next? Why, they all bounce off for a collective skinny dip in the local lagoon, of course! This invidious activity is lecherously spied upon by a man who arrived on the isle with his buddy in a dinghy. For his implied naked swim session, the "totally nude"

effed was apparently achieved via "invisible" leathene body stockings, but the results are still rather daring for the period.

The remaining girls soon banded these newly-arrived eligible males, and then it's promptly back to peeing in close to non-existent (for 1958 anyway) swim suits and dilly dandering with their bare-chested beefcake beaus. The hedonistic non-stop party atmosphere is soon interrupted by the re-advent of D'Arcy's unsociable spider-man.

To complicate matters, despite having more than a half-dozen potential dates to choose from, the two men just don't know who to pick, but prime candidate for "Miss Spider Island 1959" (naturally) seems to be the Bardot-like ditz blonde with the biggest set of tits. Too much of the central portion of **EN TOTER HING IM NETZ, HORRORS OF SPIDER ISLAND** swells on an excess of flaccid interplay and too little hard edon. The film attains its most entertaining and satisfactory balance when it combines monster, spiders, and squealing bikini bitches in a horrendously inept and pulpy mélange.

The stereotypical conclusion is all and less than you'd expect...

**EN TOTER HING IM NETZ, HORRORS OF SPIDER ISLAND** OR IT'S HOT IN PARADISE — whatever name you prefer to call it, this veteran kraut skin 'n' scares O-film totals 80-something minutes of delightful and intentionally ridiculous trash, the way it used to be made. "Sigh"



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**HORRORS OF SPIDER ISLAND**  
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# IZBAVITELJ

1987, D: Krsto Papić

I haven't seen that many films from the former "Eastern Block" nations, less so a sampling of that region's science fiction or horror genre productions. Although, recently I've had the pleasure of watching the 1967 Russian film *VIG*, which was more of a horror/fantasy/period piece — not some straight ahead 20th Century sampling of Eastern Euro-Fright Fare. However, thanks to an acquaintance of mine who gave me a pre-record of *IZBAVITELJ*, I am able to report on at least one post-industrial age thriller-cum-horror-cum-monster flick. While *IZBAVITELJ* isn't a prime example of what makes a film work, it's a rare insight into a brand of Eastern European horror production which is not often discussed. Of course, I may not be the proper scholar to report on such a film. I have no knowledge of the native tongue it was made (or dubbed?) in. *IZBAVITELJ* possesses no subtitles and the language sounds like Russian or Czech (the production company is Jadran Film & Croatia Film if that means anything to anybody out there). That aside, where else would you have read about this film other than within the cryptic pages of *MONSTER!*? Not that many places I can guarantee you that!

The film begins and the credits are flashed upon a background composed of a hideous post-Bosh-cum-Dali painting depicting rats and rat-like humanoid intermingled with death and destruction. By way of this introduction you get the basics of what the film must be about: some heinous force is at work and it has something to do with an evil rodent mutant subspecies of humankind. The illustration almost looks like a cover to some depraved horror paperback from the early to mid 60's (and considering it is "based on the novel by Aleksandra Grmel" — whoever he is — that doesn't surprise me). It's surprisingly different from the blatantly exploitative video box art (see the back cover of this issue). In place of the screaming half-human faces, distorted images of men being dismembered by rat-monsters and a cartoonish image of Ivan, the hero of the film, the video box art depicts a naked half-rat/half human mutant woman wiggling around on an operating table as a prurish rodent-humanoid peers out at the onlooker. While the box representation is closer to the visual cinematic truth for what *IZBAVITELJ* is, the opening credits depict the true mental horror which will unfold for our protagonist.

Taking place somewhere during the 1930's, and in the economic desolation of a winter-died Eastern European city, a crowd gathers at a spot where a mysterious death has occurred. Reporter Ivan Gejski attempts to gather some information but is rebuffed. He strolls back to the newspaper office only to get his pinkie lip. That wasn't bad enough he gets kicked out of his one-room apartment by the angry landlady who throws all of his

accumulated stuff down the stairwell and into the street. Without a job and no prospect of getting one real soon, Ivan arrives at the town square and attempts to sell some of his belonging along with the rest of the depressed, out-of-work slobs. There Ivan meets a not-so-dobbbish and downright pretty woman who takes pity on him. After a few short pleasantries and mutual snarks at the government, the woman offers the chilled ex-reporter her wool scarf and a phone number where he may find some work. "Ask for Sonja," she tells him. Suddenly there is a hectic rush of bodies as a band of the local authority storms through the square knocking people and parcels sunder. The woman has mysteriously disappeared and Ivan is left with nothing but his scattered and trod-upon belongings and the woman's scented scarf. He asks fellow beggars about her, but they don't seem to know what he's talking about.

Later than night as Ivan huddles on a park bench, his restless sleep is disrupted by cries of joy. As he shakes off sleep Ivan discovers that he has fallen asleep near to a warehouse in which, through the large windows, he spies the twirling silhouettes of party-goers. He watches for a while, then gathers up his scarf around his neck and falls back to sleep.

The next day he sets out to find the woman again, but cannot



TOP: Ivan investigates the shattered Lab.  
BELOW: A dead mutant rat humanoid.

locate her. In the market place he spies a rat and a sudden fit of revulsion shudders through his body. Rushing to a stall, Ivan vomits. The days are getting pretty bleak for our hero, and with no pocket change to make the call to "Sonya" he wanders the city.

That evening — as he occupies on the same bench near the warehouse, Ivan hunkers down for the night. The night watchman of the precinct strolls over to the huddled mass on the park bench and gives Ivan a nudge. "I know a better place for you to sleep," the watchman must say, and suggests that Ivan should spend the night in the warehouse, otherwise known as the "Bunker." The officer guides Ivan to a manhole outside of the warehouse where last night's revelers have returned. Ivan removes the manhole cap and descends into the dark. After a while he makes his way to an underground entrance to the "Bunker" and decides to explore. After ascending a few levels he discovers a room which is packed with books, legal documents, a phone, and — more importantly for the moment — food. The place is a virtual pack-rat's paradise (humm...). After stuffing his face with cheese, bread, and sausages, Ivan discovers that the phone works and he calls "Sonya." There is a brief exchange and he hangs up and returns his dinner.

After eating his fill, Ivan investigates the "Bunker." He soon comes across a hiding place where he can get a clear eyeful of what the big party is all about. Hundreds of people are assembled in the building's main ballroom where they are eating, laughing, dancing, and fucking. It's a winking mass of bourgeois flesh, and some of that flesh isn't all that appealing to Ivan. There seems to be something odd about a good many of the men and women. The weirdos look kind of dead — with shrivelled, ratish faces and long pointy incisors. Disgusted, Ivan bolts upright, knocking down a small vase which shatters and catches everyone's attention. A hush falls on the crowd and the human must flee the building to keep from being apprehended.

Ivan returns the next day with the police in tow. They find the warehouse empty except for scattered papers, bones and other bits of trash. His story of the rodent-humanoids isn't believed for a second. Or was it? A bearded man follows Ivan as he leaves the warehouse.

Depressed, Ivan makes his way to a local tavern, but he starts screaming when distorted rat-like faces peering at him from the assembled rank and file. He runs from the displeased crowd only to be intercepted by a bearded scientist — Sonya's father who had been searching the town for Ivan.

The kindly scientist leads Ivan to his home where our wide-eyed Roman Polanski look-a-like meets Sonya, a scowling red-head. They have dinner and Ivan scans the old man's books on rats, their society, and their habits. After Ivan has absorbed the knowledge (whatever it is, he reads out loud from those books solid for at least five minutes), he is herded into a secret lab where Scientist Dad shows the man his latest batch of rat-killer serum in action. You see, there is a new vicious breed of rat now in existence, and it even kills its fellow rodents if they

aren't to its liking. Sonya and her father believe that there is a mutant form of human-rat living in the bowels of the city. However, he has made an extract of the serum which will prove fatal to the humanoid.

Ivan and Sonya begin to hang out all bars together. Ivan helps the old man during the day with his tasks, and beds Sonya at night. His previous horrors are but ugly men ories as he falls in love with Sonya. One night as they share a drink at a tavern Sonya is bitten by a rat. She screams and Ivan blows up at the tavern owner. They leave, and Sonya's father threatens his daughter to the lip. However, from that night on Sonya seems to have changed. She will kiss Ivan then attempt to strangle him then break down in tears. Still, they make love frequently.

One late evening after a torrid bit of rolling about in bed, the lovers separate and take a breather. Suddenly there is a crash in the house and the two discover that Sonya's father has been brutally murdered! Ivan and Sonya call the police and the incident is put under investigation. The two meet with the Police Inspector about the case. He assures them that everything that can be done will be done.

After leaving the police station they return to the lab only to find it in shambles. Among the broken beakers and lab equipment are two dead rat-humanoids! In their violent act of sabotaging the lab they must have accidentally released a cloud of the new anti-rodent-mutant serum. So, there is a new breed of monster mice, Ivan concludes, and they know of the scientist. Ivan and Sonya fix up the lab and our trusty hero distills a few beakers full of the brew. He's ready to put the stuff to the ultimate test — and avenge the death of Sonya's father!

Sneaking back into the "Bunker" via the underground entrance, Ivan makes his way up to the ballroom where the Home Pictures are back to their gobbling of goodies and fucking of females. Ivan waits a while to see what is going on. A mysterious hooded and caped figure enters into the crowd and address the mass of mice minions. After a long speech which must have something to do with "the New World Order", Ivan cannot hold back his hand any longer. He stands up and sends bottle after bottle of the potent poison hurtling down into the throng. The monsters scatter, and those unfortunate enough to be engulfed by a cloud of the toxic chemical cocktail scream, fall, and die horribly — their bodies twitching and their faces contorting into ugly ratish masks. Ivan spies the enigmatic leader scuttling out aside door and takes off after it. As they make their way out of the "Bunker" and into the city proper, Ivan checks package after package of the deadly concoction at the fleeing Lord of the Rats. None of the misfires find their intended target, although after puff of gas does ferret out a few of the mutants from the regular folks on the street. Like Corran's interpretation of Pow's Red Death, Ivan-as-Pow spreads the noxious fumes as he races past people in his chase after the hooded shape. He passes a couple smooching in a dark alley way. Suddenly the woman lurches from her lover's embrace as the gas takes effect and, in a chilling scene, shrivels up and sprouts sharp incisors. As she spasms on the ground her boyfriend covers his mouth

as if to choke back some puke and leans silently down the street. The hooded rat man eludes Ivan, and our hero eventually meets up with the Inspector who was out for a nightly stroll. Ivan tries to explain what has gone on, but the Inspector shakes his head and instructs two of his men (who appeared out of nowhere) to escort the obviously distraught man back to his home.

Ivan is lead to a car, but he is not taken home, but straight to the "Bunker." Once dragged inside Ivan is witness to the insidious method in which his fellow humans are indoctrinated into the rat-humanoid society. Our kindly night watchman from the beginning of the film is brought before Ivan. Bound by the wrists he is stripped of his clothes and thrown into a cell inhabited by hungry mutant rats which bite him ferociously! Bloodied but still very much alive, the man is lead away, his eyes glazed over and the mutation just beginning.

A hooded figure is then introduced to our bewildered hero. The individual enters into the light and we see that it is the Inspector! The Inspector takes this time to explain to Ivan (and the viewer if you understand any of it) about the new Society of the Rat. After a good five minutes of explanations, Ivan has had enough and breaks free of his captors. He escapes the "Bunker" and flees into the night. On his way back to the lab he runs into the woman with whom he shared his begging space with weeks earlier. He blames her for everything and accuses her of being in league with the mutants. She tries to explain herself but Ivan strangles her and throws the body over a nearby bridge. He then rushes home to the lab.

At the laboratory he buses himself in trying to brew up another batch of the anti-mutation soup when Sonya spies into the room. He barely notices her when the beaker containing the vital liquid explodes. Something went wrong! That wasn't suppose to happen! "Oh forget it," Sonya seems to say to her lover, "Touch me." She disrobes for Ivan and awaits him to fondle her — outside of the lab and the cloud of gas therein. Realizing that he had killed an innocent woman and that Sonya is now a member (or always had been since she was bitten?) of the new class of human beings, he attacks her. In a moment of weakness, Ivan lets Sonya live and she scampers out of the room. Just then the Inspector enters the chamber now that it has cleared of the deadly fumes. Another five minutes speech is uttered by this big wind bag, but Ivan puts a cork in it with a minuscule shower the anti-serum which had been dripping off the table and into a pan. Covering his face the Inspector is led out of the lab by two cowering bodyguards. Next we see that the man has curled up on the floor dead, rats gnawing at his corpse.

Days later as a disheveled Ivan reclines on a park bench in another city, a woman walks by him. He doesn't notice her at first, but a double take later it dawns that from behind it sure as hell looks like Sonya. As the woman makes her way out of the city, Ivan begins to trail her. For Ivan, the war is not yet over.

IBAVITELJ is moody and very, very dark. What humor there is, it's so subtle and obtuse that you have to watch to see if the characters are really smiling because they are having fun, or that it's a nervous laugh. Fans of atmosphere will love some of

the interior shots of the mutant hoard in the "Bunker" and the many chases through the dark and dingy streets of this unnamed doomed city. Director Papic deftly handles the tense and unnerving scenes where in which the mutants party and hulk about. Still, one cannot shake the feeling that the film is wanting in the logic department. The structure is there, but the plot is lacking. Like so many Italian horror films, especially those of Dario Argento, there is a beauty to the film — but it doesn't make much sense by the time it's over. Despite these minor gripes, don't ever stop yourself from renting a film that you know absolutely nothing about. When I was given IBAVITELJ I was skeptical at its contents. After repeated viewing I am certain that if given the right distributor and a decent dub job, this film would make a strong entry into the alternate-society/paranoid fantasy sub-genre along with INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS, SOCIETY, and Romero's DEAD Trilogy.

## NEXT ISSUE:

I WAS A TEENAGE MUMMY, Jean Rollin's LA MORTE VIVANTE, SOUND OF HORROR, TOPLINE, PLEASE DON'T EAT THE BABIES, 'zine reviews, monsters, and more!!!



Available at the  
end of May 1992

## CHIMERA



## US VIDEO RELEASE TITLE: MONKEY BOY

British TV Monster Movie reviewed by Tony Lee

While working in a busy NHS hospital, nurse Tracy Fiddord is offered a better job in the private "fertility" ward, the Jenner Clinic. Travelling up from London to North Yorkshire, she leaves behind boyfriend Peter Carson, a journalist heavy into film trivia (an article on Douglas Fairbanks' lending tutor anyone?). He's not too happy about Tracy's move, especially as the first he hears about it is when he's disturbed by the noise of her going-away party. From the ensuing row, we learn that their relationship wasn't working, but their final parting isn't really bitter and they promise to keep in touch.

The Jenner Clinic is out in the country, very quiet and far away from the bustle of a city casualty ward. All seems normal, but for the off limits section where they keep test animals. The unchallenging nightshift Tracy is assigned to would be deathly boring except for the mysterious activities centering in those out of bounds laboratories. The clinic's test-tube babies program is just a cover for advanced research into genetic-engineering, and we see that Dr. Jenner (David Calder) is displeased at a lack of progress in some areas of the secret project. He wants something to satisfy the clinic's financial backers, a product he can patent. A worried Tracy calls Peter for help, unsure what's really happening as nobody tells her anything. Midnight staff meetings and sudden panicky actions increase her suspicions, which prove well founded when one of the experiments manages to escape.

This is the opening episode, first of four 50 minute installments of ZenthrAnglia's TV production of CHIMERA of a mini-series adapted by Stephen Gallagher from his own 1982 novel, and directed by Lawrence Gordon Clark, maker of the gripping IRA thriller HARRY'S GAME. According to producer Nick Gillett, "CHIMERA is a controversial story about... scientific research that may be going on in secret, and about how such developments may be covered up by the Government." But how can you make a drama out of something unseen and unknown? "We aim to convey the fear that is aroused when an ordinary man or woman tries to find out what is really going on behind the facade, and meets the forces of darkness," says Nick. Meeting those sinister forces in CHIMERA, is actor John Lynch (best known to genre fans for his supporting role in last year's HARDWARE), who plays crusading journalist Peter Carson. "There are some highly emotionally-charged scenes about issues which are now very topical," said John, and he considers the issue of genetic-engineering particularly relevant. "The stories that are around about such developments, and the things that can be done in theory are frightening, and not far away from what CHIMERA is dealing with." In his role as reluctant hero Carson, he has to deal with the shock of discovering girlfriend Tracy has been murdered along with everyone else at the Jenner Clinic. (Actress Eimer Gillespie's heroine is unexpectedly killed off very early on in CHIMERA, in a plot twist reminiscent of Hitchcock's PSYCHO).

While local police scour the Yorkshire Moors for whoever's responsible for the first episode's climactic massacre, and the suffer Carson tries to contain his grief, the British Government figure of Hennessey appears. Played with a dark malevolence by Kenneth Cranham (star of HELLBOND: HELLRAISER II), this character brings a whole new dimension of political repression to CHIMERA, "I suppose I have played more than my share of nasty types, but I am getting used to it," Ken notes. Does he think the story of CHIMERA is realistic? "I wouldn't put anything past them," he says, referring to the speculative SF background of CHIMERA's nightmarish scenario. On his arrival in the sleepy Yorkshire town nearest the Jenner Clinic, the antagonistic Hennessey orders all police out of the area, and calls up an army of khaki-clad "specialists" who throw a security web around the site. Highly placed and powerful, Hennessey conducts the cover-up with a sorcerer's finesse, using his telephone like a magic wand, mutilated victims disappear en route to the mortuary, the press are officially gagged by a "D" notice, and the regular police's mass-murder inquiry is abruptly cancelled without any explanation to the detective in charge. The narrative splinters, following a number of twists and themes. Lone survivor of the Jenner Clinic's staff, Alison Wells (a pivotal character played by Christine Kavanagh) had foreseen trouble and left work early on the night of the slaughter, she returns to aid Hennessey's plot to conceal the truth and avoid a public scandal. A sign language expert is called in to interrogate a laboratory chimpanzee at the clinic, and



this leads to one of CHIMERA's moments of bizarre humor. We learn the ape can indeed communicate and hold broken conversations in an Arling version of the system used by deaf and dumb humans. "Tell him he gets no more chocolate until we get an answer," Hennessy instructs the sign interpreter. The ape gives in. Meanwhile, on a nearby farm there's something lurking in the hayloft of an old barn, where a couple of over-imaginative kids have tea parties for their new friend, Mr. Scarecrow.

In part three, Peter Carson's subversive investigation uncovers Dr. Jenner's dark past, including details of the probably illegal, certainly unethical genetic-engineering experiment he initiated a decade ago. The revolutionary project led to the laboratory creation of a human/ape hybrid called "Chad." This creature has been kept alive purely for experimental purposes, imprisoned in Jenner's secure clinic. Now he's out roaming the countryside, a lost and lonely figure on the run from para-military teams and helicopter patrols. Carson too, is pursued by police on orders from a concerned Hennessy, bothered about reports of the journalist's prying into classified areas of MoD activity. Carson manages to escape into London's backstreets with his video-taped evidence showing the chimera Chad's existence, intact. After these revelations, the doubly tragic denouement of part four, is neither unexpected or long in coming. "It's not over yet" vows Carson. But later, in a post office sorting room, we see Hennessy photocopy copies of an incriminating video that had been mailed to the press.

An uneven mixture of mad doctor SF, man-on-the-loose thriller, conspiracy chiller, and monster hunt, CHIMERA is peppered with curious and delightful B-movie imagery, broken chicken eggs, animal cages littered with children's toys, blood splattered on white medical coats - all simple but effective symbols of a complex, nerve-jangling and ever-popular theme. Writer Stephen Gallagher did his homework before starting the original novel, "I came across claims [that scientists] produced a chimera, but had destroyed it at the embryo stage," he says. The rapidly advancing technology of genetic manipulation is, he states, "a Pandora's box." Adding, "the economic pressures for such progress... could provide cheap labor and military fodder, and [chimeras] could be harvested for transplant organs... my main fear is that we could have a slave species with no rights, who would live for nothing but exploitation. It would be social cruelty on a mass scale." This prophetic idea is included in the TV adaptation (which Gallagher confidently tackled following his experience scripting DR. WHO), in a chilling scene showing its most unusual production line. The story is full-blooded and does not shirk the issues," he claims. "We show a creature which does terrible things to his victims, but who is just as much a victim."

The "chimera" Chad is played by actor Douglas Mann, under sophisticated make-up and animatronics devised by Bob Keen of the Image Animation company that worked on such monster horrors as HELLRAISER and NIGHTBREED. The problems of making Chad believable as a half-ape character, fell upon primate consultant, Peter Elliot. An animal trainer who perfected his art of "champing" on such movies as GREYSTOKE

(1984), and most recently GORILLAS IN THE MIST, he coached Douglass Mann in simian movement and behavior to prepare him for the demanding role of Chad, "a monster with a heart," says Peter. "He is just a misunderstood guy (but, he explains)... adult chimps are eight to ten times stronger in the upper body than man, and have the emotional stability of a one year old (human) child." In CHIMERA, the physically superhuman Chad rips and snags his way through the supporting cast, to escape certain death at the hands of Dr. Jenner when his experimental life is deemed over. The violence though, is explicit only by the usually restrictive standards of television, and it's unlikely to bother anyone who has already started school - despite the TV announcer's dire warnings about "scenes which may disturb."

So, is the film as Ken Cranham claims, "(x) Frankenstein of the Nineties", or merely sub-Outsiders techno-lair? CHIMERA does have its moments of compelling suspense and low-voltage shock, which easily eclipse the highlights of the earlier story into the questionable values of genetic research which produced the absurd FIRST BORN (BBC-TV 1988). But, compared to other topical, futuristic, small screen dramatic-thriller serials of recent times, like the nuclear-charged EDGE OF DARKNESS, or even the quirky mysteries of TWIN PEAKS, it's a generally tame and only mildly interesting effort. Well intentioned, but a little too polite for even the average goateed's fervent tastes.

*"A study in the late sixties predicted sub-humans would be available by 2025. That forecasted date is reducing by the day."*

- Stephen Gallagher.



# PORNO HOLOCAUST

1980, D: Joe D'Amato

Nasty Monster Movie Harpooned by Erik Sulev

Uh, eh, it looks like MONSTER! is again about to get pushed into X-rated territory (see MON 74 and a review of two Hong Kong porno-vampire films for the first venture into this forbidden exotic zone), with this dumb, nasty, and rude entry from one of my favorite Italians, the one and only Joe D'Amato. For years we've seen the title PORNO HOLOCAUST in numerous filmographies dealing with Signor D'Amato, but had anyone actually ever seen the thing? Some said that it was EROTIC NIGHTS OF THE LIVING DEAD with hardcore inserts, while other pessimists declared that it didn't even exist. Well, they were wrong and now that we've finally been able to see an Italian language version, can say with all honesty that the thrill wasn't the kill, but rather the chase.

As monsters go, PORNO HOLOCAUST is fairly thin going (although the man with the monster dick is anything but), and above anything else, it is really just another fuck film. Let's face it, a lot of this you've seen before, except the people sticking it to each other are more unprofessional, and a hell of a lot more ugly. D'Amato never hesitates to get his camera in close for all the meat shots, and in one scene on an extremely rocky beach, the camera, placed under a hard-working couple, actually catches a few drops of sweat from the pair of private parts - classy stuff indeed!

The story concerns a group of scientists arriving at a Caribbean island to investigate the levels of radiation fallout following some nuclear testing. Apparently it doesn't concern them too much, since they joke about with little on, and don't mind rolling about on these "contaminated" areas. It turns out however, that the radiation did have an effect - it turned some big island native into a zombie with awful-looking sores on his face, who has nothing better to do but to rape the women and crush the heads of the men! D'Amato thoroughly abuses the privilege of using P.O.V. shots of this guy peaking through the bushes at the scientists. When we finally do get to see him and his ugly face, he's loosened his drawing and is stuffing his huge dick in this poor woman's mouth - the poor actress was probably waiting around the rest of the shoot as if she had lockjaw.

Besides this, the monster smashes a few heads in full bloody color (no skinning here), strangles big name star George Eastman before he gets a chance to pull out his cock-marked pecker, screws around a bit more, and finally gets shot with one arrow, walks around, then dies. That's it, the movie's over, but not before the two sunbathing white folk show their love for each other in a rowboat, slowly drifting away...

As you can probably guess, the movie is pretty racist in its

depiction of Africans. Aside from the zombie and his penis, whenever we see a black man, D'Amato attempts to prove the stereotype of black man and their sexual prowess. Early in the film, one of the actresses takes on two well-endowed blacks and the results are disastrous. Both guys look absolutely terrified, keep looking at the camera for directions, and suffer stage-fright - if you know what I mean. As well, the woman looks none-to-pleased at having to blow one guy while the other works at getting into her ass. The look on her face says "Mom, I'm sorry I ran away from home, you were right, it's hard breaking into showbiz, please let me come back!" If anything this scene is more pathetic than erotic. Later on, this poor lass is mixed up in a lepid lesbian scene, she and her partner slide themselves along a fallen tree with lots of sharp dried burkships, which could not have been at all comfortable. What is wrong with these people? Does Joe have a gun pointed at them off-screen?

I still find myself marveling at George (Luigi Montitore) Eastman's career. I mean, here's a guy who's really had a range of high and low, there is his screenwriting credits, he's acted in a Fellini movie (the Micolaur in FELLINI SATYRICON), and he's found himself involved in the oddest projects with Joe D'Amato. How can you not help but admire the guy?

All fun aside, PORNO HOLOCAUST is pretty bad, and has a sneering, nasty element about it, providing it's share of scummy entertainment. I was disappointed that the rumor of the zombie dick that strangled people failed to materialize, and that the monster role was secondary to the unimaginative sexual antics of the rest of the class. If someone could take a similar goofy storyline and do it well (c'mon Frank Henenlotter), can you imagine the results? Meanwhile, D'Amato still has a special place in my heart despite the failure of PORNO HOLOCAUST to be a real mindbender. Already the countdown is on to see the intriguingly named BLUE EROTIC ANIMAL JOB - now there's a monster movie!!

## THE BLOODY SECT

Original Title: SECTA SINIESTRA

1982, Ds: Ignachio Iquino & Steve McCoy

Quickie sickie by Dale Pierce

THE BLOODY SECT possesses an interesting plot for a film which circulated in Europe but has yet to be released in the States. A good prospect for the future of our video industry would be their importing the shitload of Italian, French and Spanish productions which are currently available (something

come earlier in the 60s by Velazquez, Lightning, and so forth — since dropped). The film involves a Satanist who initiates an artificial insemination clinic with — get this! — samples of the Devil's sperm. This ludicrous plot is an attempt to bring about the birth of the Anti-Christ and his cronies. The gang of neozes then proceed to rub out anyone who attempts to stop them. As two of the impregnated women find out about what is happening, they too are eradicated before they can get abortions. The third woman, however, gives birth to a demon and a hell breaks loose as the film reaches its exciting climax. The cast includes an all Spanish crew from Barcelona, where the company that made the film was based. Diana Concha, Carlos Marín, Oscar Daniel, and Sylvia Alán all star, meaningless to an American audience but significant in Europe as these things go. All the actors and actresses have had supporting roles in various Euro-horror films before and since this film was made.

# ALIEN 2

Original Title: **ALIEN 2: SULLA TERRA**

Alternate Foreign Title:

**ALIEN 2, EXTRANOS SOBRE LA TIERRA**

1980, D: Sam Cromwell (aka Ciro Ippolito)

**INTERGALACTIC TERROR SQUASHED**

**BY DENNIS CAPIČIK**

Many people in the past have panned Luigi Cozzi's **ALIEN CONTAMINATION** for its unoriginality and asinine script. Cozzi's film pits Ian McCulloch and Louise Marleau against a bunch of explosive alien eggs as well as a huge immobile cyclopean monster. I do admit that the film is very flawed, but it moved along at a good pace and proved to be an entertaining ninety minutes — which is something **ALIEN 2** fails to do.

This unbelievably atrocious film begins with a space capsule descending to Earth which the Navy is preparing to retrieve upon splashdown. The film then moves to a local television talkshow that is also awaiting the arrival of the capsule, but in the meantime the geologist Thelma (Belinda Mayne) Joyce is on the program discussing various caverns which she has explored, bringing her discussion to the startling conclusion that man has explored outer space yet we are still unfamiliar with our own inner planet. However, before Thelma leaves the program she experiences some sort of premonition causing her to faint on national television. This and other similar scenes are never fully explained, leaving the viewer in the dark. There is the one exception, that being the one vague quote from some unknown character who simply states, "It's you that creates these monsters within yourself." That must explain it. After her fiasco on the show Thelma meets up with all her spelunking associates at the bowling alley (?!), because they had arranged to explore a certain cave for that day. On their way to the cavern they incidentally hear a bulletin on the radio that the capsule has

finally landed, except for the fact that no astronauts were on board! Stranger still is that forty minutes before the astronauts landed they informed NASA that everything was fine.

Blue stones/meteorites (which pulsate at times) suddenly begin to appear all over the city (maybe the entire world, but that is never made clear) which are picked up by many unsuspecting people including one of Thelma's team. Half an hour into the film nothing has really happened and I was beginning to fall asleep. Once they all reach the spelunking site, the film slows its pace considerably almost to a crawl with everyone walking around aimlessly in the dark. Someone is eventually killed by some sort of other-worldly creature which was obviously spawned by the mysterious blue stone carried by one of the spelunkers. This scene got my spirits up with some squishy gore SFX, but five minutes later the film returned to its typically dull state and my eyelids began to get heavy once again. Thelma, along with another man (Marc Bodin), do eventually escape and return to the city only to find it desolated. More wandering ensues and they end up at the bowling alley from beginning of the film. They encounter more aliens with only Thelma escaping this time. She runs out into the street in a panic when the film focuses on her screaming face and a lame quote stating, "you may be next" is superimposed over the screen. It's obvious that **ALIEN 2**'s filmmakers didn't know how to end this already lost cause of a film.

**ALIEN 2** is a very poorly structured film to say the least, and it's littered with pathos. What were Thelma's premonitions all about? What were all those blue meteorites and where the hell did they come from? And what happened to those astronauts? None of these points ever come together to give us a logical



ITALIAN VIDEO BOX ART FOR **ALIEN 2**

solution that would trigger off the following events in the film. The first thirty or so minutes is such a vague mess that it leaves the viewer confused, while the rest of the film is a yawn-induced bore. Ippolito's direction is virtually non-existent with people walking through their roles in a very disinterested fashion, while Carlo Boglio's editing is some of the poorest I've ever seen. Already fairly short at eighty five minutes, the film needed to be heightened in many areas, especially the scenes the caverns which merely pad the film out with some expedition members climbing various cavern walls and stalagmites. A particular scene that comes readily to mind is an unbelievable two minute racking shot of a man's alien-infected body. The camera begins at his feet (which I couldn't even recognize in this dimly lit sequence) and ever so slowly tracks to his head which begins to pulsate, and bursts open revealing an alien arm and lots of

sputing blood. A decent scene which is specifically centered on building tension, but rather bores you to death with its blood editing. Other technical credits such as the static cinematography or horrendous music (courtesy of Oliver Onions, otherwise known as Guido and Maurizio DeAngelis whose music is usually quite good) aren't even worth discussing here, so I won't bore you with it.

ALIEN 2 is undoubtedly one of the worst films I have had the displeasure of sitting through. There are no redeeming values in it except for some decent gore which can be seen in any other Italian post-ALIEN do-off. As far as Italian low-budget films go, ALIEN 2's characters and incidents are carelessly flung together with an absolute absence of creative thrills, leaving little or no diversion for the genre fan. Simply awful.

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# HOW I STOPPED LIVING AND BECAME A MIXED-UP, LOW-BUDGET ZOMBIE

## BEING A MONSTER ON THE SET OF THE VIDEO DEAD

BY LORY-MICHAEL RINGUETTE

These days the major Los Angeles studios tend to think they have to spend more and make millions on every feature, but throughout the USA and the rest of the world there are countless low-budget, non-union action and horror productions brought in for well under \$200,000. Most are made for overseas theaters and the direct-to-video market here at home. Hollywood North (the greater San Francisco Bay area) is a frequent location used for this style of filmmaking.

My first speaking role (a couple of lines and a lot of snarling) was in just such a shoe string production, **THE VIDEO DEAD** written, produced and directed in 1986 by Robert Scott. Like many such efforts it was shot in 16mm and later blown to 35mm by its distributor, Manson International (no relation to Charles).

It all started for me at an unusual audition where I was asked by Robert to pretend I'd just risen from the dead and rediscovered the telephone. This led to my being cast in a dual role as a zombie named Hall-Creeper and as a delivery man.

Little did I know how hard a job I'd taken on. During pre-production, the film's special effects man, Dale Hale, Jr., had to meet with each of the "dead" zombies in order to form head casts. This process required my head to be completely covered (except for two nostrils out of my nose) for over 20 minutes with alginate material. It's kind of like being buried alive. Once this mold was finished it was used to help create latex prosthetic facial features needed to make me into one of five distinctively different zombies. These creatures were known as the Bride (she decapitated, but continues to carry her head around), Ironhead (one of his victims unsuccessfully tries to stop him by shoving an iron into his head), Jack (named after the actor who played him), Jimmy D (looked a little like James Dean), and Hall-Creeper (played by myself).

It's not hard to figure out how Robert came up with the name Hall-Creeper. About mid-way through the film, the "Hero" pulls out his bow and shoots me full of arrows before slashing my body in half with — you guessed it — a chainsaw. This scene presented Dale with some interesting technical problems. Bombarding me full of arrows was one of the simpler effects needed. For this he created a spring mechanism that popped out half an arrow from my side while the camera filmed from the opposite direction. I was amazed how real this looked on the screen.

Next came the hard part, showing me chainsawed in half. Since there was no budget for an Industrial Lights & Magic "type" animatronics dummy, Dale really had to use his creative side. First he dug a ditch the length of my body for me to lay in. Then I was entirely buried with dirt, except for my head and arms. A fake torso with jointed wooden legs was carefully placed directly over me in a horizontal position that made it seem like my body. Invisible wires had been attached to each of the legs so they could be maneuvered like a marionette. This way when Rocky Duvall (the hero) slashed the body with the buzzing chainsaw, the two



LEFT: LORY-MICHAEL RINGUETTE (BEFORE)  
RIGHT: LORY-MICHAEL RINGUETTE (AFTER)

separated halves could continued to move.

Since Hall-Creeper is a member of the undead, a small thing like loss of legs barely slowed him down. This meant several more long days of working in various uncomfortable positions such as being contorted on a skateboard with the heavy fake torso tied to the front of me or squatting behind a couch.

No doubt about it, making movies is hard work, but there's nothing I'd rather be doing. For many of us, **THE VIDEO DEAD** was that also important first-screen credit. Bob Series, the film's editor went on to become an editor on the Steve Martin film **L.A. STORY**, Dale Hale is about to direct his won first feature, and I've been able to continue to build by resume by being willing to travel and landing principal roles in many independent productions such as **FIREIGHT**, **SHADOW HUNTER**, **THEY CALL ME MACHO WOMAN** (Troma), and **STEELHEEL** (United Artists) to be released this summer. Nevertheless, it first took to be being a

# LETTERS!

KRONOS PRODUCTIONS  
MPO BOX 67  
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Dear Tim,

I have to say that your 'zine has improved a lot with more pages, nice lay out, and more interesting articles (I liked much the HAMBURGER horrors and the addition to your staff of Horacio is priceless).

Here is some more information on that **FRANKENSTEIN'S KUNG FU MONSTER** with its German release title, and, who know why, keeps on being mentioned while the real movie title is **V3 SUPER RIDER**, referring to the third character in the "Kamen Rider" saga, Kamen Rider V3. Apparently, this movie is composed of stock footage from the TV episodes with Chinese actors in place of the Japanese ones. This could be very true, but I also think that they borrowed costumes from Toei, the production company of the original Japanese episodes, and not only footage. It's just guessing on my part. The prequel to **FRANKENSTEIN'S KUNG FU MONSTER** is **SUPER RIDERS AGAINST THE DEVIL** (German title **KRIEG DER INFRAS**) and is even more wild than the second installment in the Chinese adventures of the Kamen Riders as it explains the origins of Kamen Rider 1. Utilizing footage from Japanese super hero TV shows seems to be commonplace in Hong Kong/Taiwan, in fact we also have **ROBOTER DER STERNE: THE TROON MAN** starring the giant red robot **MACH BARON** from the serial **SUPA ROBOTO MAHA BARON/SUPER ROBOT MACH BARON**, the title character looks like a big toy than a real war machine. Again, the actors are Chinese while the **SPFX** were made in Japan. Another example is **MARS MEN** (released here in Italy as **MARS MEN-GLI UOMINI DI MARTE**) where they not only used film from the original serial **JUMBORG**

## Frankensteins KUNG-FU-MONSTER

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Kon-Lung Man, Wan-Man Lee  
Regie: Cheong-Kwong-Ling · 75 Min.

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Frankensteins  
**KUNG-FU**  
Monster

continued on next page!

ACE, but borrowed the costume of an ULTRAMAN-replica to get it fighting with A giant Taiwanese living statue against evil Demongons (what?!!). In the Italian version, we see a plane transforming into Jumborg Ace (as happens in the original series) while the plot refers to it as "the American robot sent to destroy the Martians", probably would be better to see the original version...

Here's my HAMBURGER HORRORS list. These are just a few titles, but there are many more I'd like to have (in a few words, every Asian fantasy/horror film!)

- BOXER'S OMEN (after reading Horacio's review it is one of my most wanted burgers!)
- BLOOD FREAKS (a man who turns into a turkey? WOW!)
- BLACK DEVIL DOLL FROM HELL
- LA NAVE DE LOS MONSTRUOS (I still remember its wonderful Italian lobby cards, but I've never been able to see the movie!)
- THE PIG FUCKING MOVIE (It sounds sick, and I may be too, but calm down - it isn't a bestiality porn flick. Read the review in COLD SWEAT 2 to know more about it...)

- THE SHE CREATURE
- SEEDING OF A GHOST (A Chinese movie with a flying, living placenta!!!)
- SOUL VENGEANCE (the infamous killer-peris movie)
- Ary Mojica Marina movie
- MANOS HANDS OF FATE
- FORCE FIVE (a Korean fantasy film with characters totally copied from the TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES who pilot giant robots against an evil queen!)

Caled

MAX DELLA MORA  
Italy

## zines and other stuff

### BLOOD AND BLACK LACE Issue 2

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Britain's only all Italian-horror movie magazine. Andrew Featherstone's BLOOD AND BLACK LACE is a full Euro-sized, glossypages, color cover, great articles-pack wonder. This issue covers: Tim Lucas' interview with Sam Z. Arkoff about Mario Bava's days with A.I.P., a profile of Michele Soavi, and much more! Simply amazing.

### SPLATTING IMAGE

Nummer Neun

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It may all be written in German, but SPLATTING IMAGE is the best Euro-zine I've seen which covers just about everything bizarre and crazy. This is no exception as it has an interview with Jess Franco (with lots of Lens

Romay snaps!), review of Jörg Buttgereit's newest SEX, MURDER, ART, interview with slimmester Michael Schey, and more! Great layout, full-Euro-size, glossy with many bizarre and often obscene, but important illustrations. Essential to any film buff!

### MONSTER MAKER

Issue #17

\$24/year, published quarterly

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Full size, offset magazine dedicated to the "Amateur and Professional SFX Make-up Artists". Editor Tim Davis collects together informative articles on various aspects of making men (and women) into monsters! Articles include a Michael Westmore Sr. interview, Epoxy Mold Making, Adhesives, and more. Worth checking into if you're interested in the make-up end of Cinematic monster magic.

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Since Archbishop Greg Lamb was nice enough to let me know that there is a I BOUGHT A VAMPIRE MOTORCYCLE 2 in the works (and making me a Reverend in the Church), I should make mention of his "Church of Godzilla". For the \$7 or so you send his most holy, you get a green piece of paper naming you an official reverend in the "Church of Godzilla". Kind of silly actually, but a fun and cheesy addition to one's bedroom wall. Greg hopes to get a COG newsletter out, soon, as well as T-Shirts and so forth. Bless him.





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